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## SALVAGE AND LOSSES FROM LATIN LITERATURE

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"Auguror, nec me fallit augurium, historias tuas immortales futuras," says the younger Pliny,<sup>1</sup> writing to the historian Tacitus, his friend, and time has justified his prophecy. This, however, only in part: all too large a portion of the great historian's work is lost to us, including more than one passage for which Pliny himself, at the request of Tacitus, supplied information.<sup>2</sup> In another instance, Pliny is less of a prophet: he is doubtful whether Martial's fame will endure;<sup>3</sup> while Martial's epigrams, happily for us, have lived to justify their author's boast<sup>4</sup> of immortality.

In some of the greatest works of Roman genius in letters, a proud consciousness of undying fame may be read freely confessed. The "Non omnis moriar" of Horace<sup>5</sup> is no more confident of immortality than the bold assertion of Ovid,<sup>6</sup> of Propertius,<sup>7</sup> and of Martial.<sup>8</sup> Vergil, to be sure, had no like assurance, nor had Tacitus: the one was perhaps too keenly conscious of the "tears" of life—the *lacrimae rerum*—and the other of life's irony. Yet Tacitus, when he says, "Agricola posteritati narratus et traditus superstes erit," in the closing sentence of the *Agricola*, seems to hope for lasting glory. Lucretius, in so many ways a kindred spirit to these, is too deadily in earnest about his message to humanity to have concern for personal fame; yet Ovid, in a familiar passage<sup>9</sup> predicts immortal glory for Lucretius and the great Mantuan as he does for Ennius and Accius.

To few Roman writers, however, was a full vision of their future given. Martial, to be sure, seems to realize his chief passport to

<sup>1</sup> Pliny *Ep.* vii. 33. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 21. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vi. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Martial viii. 3; xii. 4. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Horace *Odes* iii. 30: "Exegi monumentum," etc.

<sup>6</sup> Ovid *Metam.* xv. 871-79; *Amores* i. 15-41.

<sup>7</sup> Propertius iv. 1. 55.

<sup>8</sup> Martial vii. 84-87; viii. 3; xii. 4. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Ovid *Amores* i. 15. 19-26.

fame: "Agnoscat mores vita legatque suos"<sup>1</sup> is at once an extraordinary bit of self-criticism and a sure sense of what future ages were to find in him. The epic poets, it is true, might have presaged their fate from that of Homer: such was the nature of Roman education that epic was bound to descend in time to serve the base purposes of the school teacher. Martial speaks plainly enough on this point.<sup>2</sup> Horace studied Homer in school,<sup>3</sup> as did his young friend, Lollius,<sup>4</sup> and Vergil early achieved the melancholy distinction of the textbook. Such a fate Horace deprecates for himself,<sup>5</sup> though he foresees it;<sup>6</sup> it had already overtaken him as well as Vergil by the time of Quintilian<sup>7</sup> and Juvenal.<sup>8</sup> Later writers, among them, Suetonius,<sup>9</sup> Gellius,<sup>10</sup> Ausonius,<sup>11</sup> Macrobius,<sup>12</sup> Orosius,<sup>13</sup> and Augustine<sup>14</sup> attest the common use of the *Aeneid* in schools. In other branches of literature, the same fate awaited the author, if he survived at all: in some cases beyond, and in many below, his deserts. For instance, Juvenal, himself a teacher, would doubtless not be greatly displeased with his fate today nor, certainly, would Persius; and Pliny, who wrote those delightful letters—which ought to be read much more generally in our schools—with an eye to posterity, would doubtless be equally resigned. But Caesar! Whatever the motive, immediate or ulterior, of the *Gallic War*, it is surely the very irony of fate that his books, of all books, should today be used, to quote the singularly apt lines of Martial,

praelegat ut tumidus rauca te voce magister  
oderit et grandis virgo bonusque puer.<sup>15</sup>

If it were possible for us to get from Cicero or from Quintilian a list of the works—classics in their day or in their opinion destined to become classics—for which they were willing to predict lasting life and fame, it is certain that therein would be much that has long since been lost, and equally certain that many works that have survived would have found no place. Ovid, as we have seen, was

<sup>1</sup> Martial viii. 3. 20.

<sup>6</sup> Horace *Ep.* i. 20. 17.

<sup>11</sup> Auson. *Idyll.* iv. 56.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 3. 15-16.

<sup>7</sup> Quint. i. 8. 5; x. 1. 85.

<sup>12</sup> Macrobi. i. 24. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep.* ii. 2. 41.

<sup>8</sup> Juv. vii. 226.

<sup>13</sup> Oros. i. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* i. 2. 1, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Sueton. *Gramm.* 16.

<sup>14</sup> Aug. *De civ. dei* i. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Horace *Sat.* i. 10. 74.

<sup>10</sup> Gell. xii. 2; xiii. 21. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Martial viii. 3. 15-16.

confident that not only Vergil and Lucretius, but also Ennius and Accius, were destined forever to be enshrined in literature. He could not foresee that both the "Father of Latin literature" and Rome's greatest tragic poet were doomed to survive only in fragmentary quotations in other men's works—in most cases in the uninspired lucubrations of grammarians with an eye to archaic forms. Of the 700 lines that we have of Accius, all but a very few are preserved in Nonius; and Pater Ennius himself comes down to us—Ennius, whose virile measures stirred the hearts of Roman boys and men for generations—in pitiful *disiecti membra poetae* scattered among the writings of Latin authors all the way from Varro and Cicero to Macrobius.

Sunt bona, sunt quaedam mediocria, sunt mala plura  
quae legis hic: aliter non fit, Avite, liber,

says Martial<sup>1</sup> of his book, and the same may perhaps be said of a literature—surely of one preserved as that of Rome has been. The hand of fate has indeed been kind to some Roman writers, and has fallen heavily on many. Of the "bona" we have indeed much: not a little, too, of the "mediocria" and the "mala" that we would gladly exchange for what has been lost to us. It will perhaps be of interest, and not altogether futile, to recall some instances where our losses are most grievous.

In history, for example, fate has saved us much and has still been unkind: to mention only some of the most important of the lost works is to point to some notable gaps in our knowledge of Roman history. How valuable for a study of early Rome and its institutions would be the *Origines* of independent old Cato, and as well the several works on the same period by that prodigious scholar, Varro, the Mommsen of his day! Sulla's voluminous commentaries, too, and Cicero's history of that *annus mirabilis*, his consulship, would tell us much; these Plutarch used, we are told. That disordered period from Sulla's death to Cicero's praetorship would surely take on a new significance if the lost *History* of Sallust had survived. The *Catiline* and the *Jugurtha* are indeed monographs of great interest and—rightly interpreted—of no small value to the his-

<sup>1</sup> Martial i. 16.

torian; but it surely cannot be for them that Quintilian<sup>1</sup> dared to "match Sallust against Thucydides" and that Martial ranked him first among Roman historians.<sup>2</sup> Our loss of this work of Sallust appears to be a great one: those fascinating episodes of a period so little understood—Sertorius in Spain, the campaigns of Lucullus against Mithridates,<sup>3</sup> the fighting with the pirates down to the time of Pompey's command, the war with Spartacus, and the collapse of the Sullan constitution—would surely take on profound meaning under the hand of a writer of Sallust's genius and sympathies.

Horace says of the history of the Civil Wars by his friend Pollio:

Periculosae plenum opus aleae  
tractas et incedis per ignes  
suppositos cineri doloso<sup>4</sup>

and we could enjoy seeing how he performed a task requiring a maximum of tact and judgment. That Pollio had a mind of his own is fairly evident from his lonely criticism of Caesar's veracity,<sup>5</sup> a fact that makes the loss of his own work the more deplorable. His captious criticism of the style of a rival historian, Livy,<sup>6</sup> may perhaps indicate—but not guarantee—the quality of his own literary style.

In the field of history our most grievous loss is that of the greater part of Livy's work, in the epoch of Roman history where we need him most. The *periochae* for the missing books are, if exasperating, yet eloquent of the wealth of information Livy would supply us, particularly for the significant years of the death struggle of the Roman oligarchy. The sympathies of the great "Pompeian," as Augustus called him in generous pleasantry,<sup>7</sup> surely made him no less eloquent here than we see him in his panegyric of the mighty Rome of Hannibal's day; his expressed opinion<sup>8</sup> that Caesar's career was of doubtful benefit to Rome, and his

<sup>1</sup> Quint. x. 1. 101: "Nec opponere Thucydidi Sallustium verear."

<sup>2</sup> Martial xiv. 191: "Primus Romana Crispus in historia."

<sup>3</sup> We could, perhaps, test Ferrero's bold attempt at "construction" here.

<sup>4</sup> Hor. *Od.* ii. 1. 6-8.

<sup>6</sup> Quint. viii. 1. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Seneca *Nat. Quaest.* v. 18. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Sueton. *Iul.* 56.

<sup>7</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 34.

eulogy of Brutus and Cassius<sup>1</sup> are sufficient indications of the spirit in which he wrote.

For light upon the history of the early empire we could wish to supplement that imperial document of unique value, the *Monumentum Ancyranum*, with the written autobiography of Augustus, and could doubtless well afford to exchange the feeble annals of Velleius Paterculus for the history written by that sturdy reactionary, Cremutius Cordus, that was burned by the aediles but secretly edited.<sup>2</sup> The lost portions of Tacitus' work, too, and as well the *De viris inlustribus* of Suetonius, would have much for us.

In the drama, it would appear, we have less ground for complaint. To be sure, we have lost all but a paltry 130 lines or so of the thirty-odd comedies of Naevius, whose work is highly esteemed by Cicero and appears to have had a great vogue down to Cicero's day and even later. But we have, according to Suetonius, all the work that Terence lived to finish, and in all probability, the 21 plays of Plautus that were pronounced undoubtedly genuine by so great an authority as Varro. Our most lamentable gap in Roman comedy is perhaps in the loss of the *togatae* of such writers as Atta and Afranius. The titles show that here we miss what must have been a most interesting picture of Italian life and manners: one would like to exchange one or two of the hybrid plays of Plautus or Terence for the Italian atmosphere and Italian wit of the *Fair Maid of Setia* or *The Unsuccessful Politician*.

In tragedy there is little over which we need to grieve, if one may judge from the uninspiring fragments of the tragic poems of Ennius, Pacuvius, and Accius. Ovid's *Medea*, perhaps, or the *Thyestes* of Varius, one could read or listen to with some satisfaction, but here, it must be confessed, the surviving plays of Seneca do not offer much encouragement. What Sainte-Beuve said so aptly of the epic of Silius Italicus, "Il ne fit battre aucun cœur" might with equal force be applied to any one of Seneca's "frigid experiments," as Mr. Duff so well terms them; and the tragedies written by Roman writers could hardly have an appeal, on any count, to a reader of the present day.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 34, 35.

In oratory, besides lacking the published speeches of Cato, the Gracchi, and Caesar, we mourn the loss of many of Cicero's most important orations. His stump speech as a candidate for the consulship, the *In toga candida*,<sup>1</sup> his defense of Bestia<sup>2</sup> and of Scipio Nasica<sup>3</sup> against charges of corruption, would doubtless show the *optimus consul* in an interesting light. Some there are who would give in exchange for these, (and that *laeto animo*), the tiresome and flatulent Catilinarian speeches so much esteemed in this country. In that event, we might perhaps have time to read the Philippics, so much more worth our while.

In other departments of literature many a title comes to mind as we estimate our losses in the wreck of Latin letters. It will perhaps be enough to mention a few of the most important. What Latinist, for example, would not prize a copy of the great encyclopedia of Verrius Flaccus, or of Caesar's treatise on grammar, the *De analogia*? This last, we are told,<sup>4</sup> was written "in transitu Alpium," perhaps as the great dictator was returning from the fateful conference at Lucca. Caesar's letters, too, would be of surpassing interest; it is not unlikely that they would serve to correct some of the impressions received from those of Cicero. If the cipher in which they were written was no more difficult than Suetonius tells us<sup>5</sup> we could read them without great difficulty.

How interesting, too, would be that Roman of Romans, Cato, in his letters to his son! Not, certainly, a Chesterfield—but none the less an adviser worth having, judging from the few fragments of his admonition that have come down to us. Horace himself could not improve Cato's "rem tene: verba sequentur." Our Roman Boswell, too—Cicero's freedman Tiro—would surely give many an interesting side light upon a most fascinating personality, in his life of Cicero.<sup>6</sup> There is some reason for believing that

<sup>1</sup> Cic. *Ad Q. frat.* ii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Cic. *Phil.* xi. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Cic. *Ad Att.* ii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Sueton. *Iul.* 56: "in transitu Alpium, cum ex citiore Gallia conventibus peractis ad exercitum rediret."

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 56. 6: "si qua occultius perferenda erant, per notas scripsit, id est, sic structo litterarum ordine, ut nullum verbum effici posset: quae si qui investigare et persequi velit, quartam elementorum litteram, id est D pro A et perinde reliquas commutet."

<sup>6</sup> Plutarch *Cic.* 49.

Tiro, like Boswell, displayed excessive zeal in recording remarks made by his patron: Quintilian censures him for his indiscretion in publishing anecdotes better withheld.<sup>1</sup> Cicero himself might have wished that some of the letters published by Tiro had never seen the light; with Carlyle, he might well have prayed to be saved from his friends. "Quid vero historiae de nobis ad annos DC praedicarint? Quas quidem ego multo magis vereor quam eorum hominum qui hodie vivant rumusculos," he declares to Atticus.<sup>2</sup> But posterity will not readily forgive him for the letter written to Basilus.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, we can thank Augustus for disregarding Vergil's wishes and saving the *Aeneid*, which the author, in his dying moments, wished to have destroyed.<sup>4</sup>

The list of works so unhappily lost might be multiplied, but the wonder after all is, not that so much is lost but that so much has survived. The sack of cities and the burning of libraries, criminal carelessness and pitiful ignorance have all done their part: "quod non fecerunt barbari fecerunt Barberini." It is recorded, for instance, of Gregory the Great that he had a veritable contempt for pagan learning—"nugae et seculares litterae"—that he tried to suppress the works of Cicero, and burnt "all of the books of Livy that he could find, because they were full of idolatrous superstitions."<sup>5</sup> Similar instances of zeal so woefully misdirected must have been common: our palimpsests bear eloquent witness to what must have been a frequent mode of spoiling the Egyptians.

On the other hand, it must be said that we owe much to the passion for the classics of a Jerome or an Augustine, and more than we can estimate to the industry of the monks. Why they have preserved some authors for us, is, indeed, an interesting question. The interest of such a writer as Augustine in Varro, Cicero and Vergil must have served largely to preserve their work, while the "moral tone" of Persius and Seneca, and the tradition that associated the latter with St. Paul, goes far to explain their

<sup>1</sup> Quint. vi. 3. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Cic. *Ad Att.* ii. 5. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Cic. *Fam.* vi. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Gell. xvii. 10. 7: "Itaque cum morbo oppressus adventare mortem videret, petivit oravitque a suis amicis impense, ut Aeneida, quam nondum satis elimavisset, adolerent."

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Sandys *A History of Classical Scholarship* I, 445, and references.



survival. Desiderius, abbot of Monte Cassino in the eleventh century, was zealous in his efforts to preserve copies of Horace, Ovid's *Fasti*, Seneca, and Cicero;<sup>1</sup> and seems to have saved Varro for us. The case of such writers as Martial and Petronius invites speculation. It is possible that here we owe something to the monastic imagination.

Whether we can hope for any considerable discoveries of Latin works long regarded as lost seems very doubtful. To one who has worked in Italian libraries it often seems as if the miracle of a thorough house-cleaning might reveal much: the case of the Verona manuscript of Catullus and Cardinal Mai's discovery in 1822 of a part of the *De re publica* of Cicero offer encouragement. Perhaps Egypt may yet yield something of Rome, as she has of Menander.<sup>2</sup> So far as the writers of the Republic and early Empire are concerned there is great hope from Campania, and all students of Latin literature may well unite in the prayer that the project of Mr. Waldstein may soon be realized and Lucilius, perhaps, or Sallust, or Livy, brought forth, as was the library of books on Epicurean philosophy, from long-buried Herculanaeum.

<sup>1</sup> Sandys I, 520.

<sup>2</sup> The Oxyrhynchus papyri of 1904 (IV, 90-116) have part of an abstract of Books 48-55 of Livy. Cf. Sandys I, 659.